United Nations S/2016/922

Security Council

Distr.: General
3 November 2016
English
Original: French

Letter dated 31 October 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the communiqué of the Seventh High-Level Meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region held in Luanda on 26 October 2016 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ignace **Gata Mavita**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 31 October 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English and French]

Communiqué of the seventh high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region

1. The Heads of State and Government of the signatory countries of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region attended the seventh high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism held in Luanda on 26 October 2016. The meeting was convened by the President of the Republic of Angola, José Eduardo dos Santos, with the support of the guarantor institutions, namely, the United Nations, the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

2. The following Heads of State, Heads of Government and representatives of signatory countries participated in the meeting: the President of the Republic of Angola (host), José Eduardo dos Santos; the President of the Republic of Chad and Chairperson of the African Union, Idriss Déby Itno; the President of the Republic of the Congo, Denis Sassou N'Guesso; the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Joseph Kabila Kabange; the President of the Republic of Zambia, Edgar Chagwa Lungu; the Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya, William Ruto; the First Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi, Gaston Sindimwo; the First Vice-President of the Republic of Sudan, Hasabo Mohamed Abdelrahman; the Prime Minister of the Central African Republic, Simplice Mathieu Sarandji; and the Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland, Paul Dlamini, representing the Chair of SADC. The following heads of delegation also participated in the meeting: the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane; the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania, Augustine Mahiga; the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda, Sam Kutesa; and the Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda to Angola, Alfred G. Kalisa.

3. The following participants were also in attendance: the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma; the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, representing the Secretary-General of the United Nations; the Facilitator of the national dialogue in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Edem Kodjo; the African Union Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, Ibrahima Fall; the Executive Secretary of ICGLR, Zachary Muburi-Muita; and Jorge Cardoso, representing the Executive Secretary of SADC. In addition, special envoys and senior officials of Belgium, China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the European Union attended the meeting as official observers. The Economic Community of Central African States was also represented as an invited guest.

4. The participants in the high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism reviewed the political and security developments in the region since their previous meeting, held in New York on 29 September 2015, and agreed as outlined below.

5. The participants reaffirmed that the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework remained a vital mechanism for achieving durable peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region and renewed their full commitment to its implementation. They endorsed the reform of the Framework process, in particular the decision to hold an annual high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism hosted by one country of the region, preceded by a preparatory meeting at the level of ministers for foreign affairs, in addition to ad hoc sectoral meetings as required.

Implementation of commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework

6. The participants took note of the status report on the implementation of the Framework. While welcoming the progress achieved so far, they noted with concern the continuing challenges in achieving further progress and committed to accelerating efforts to address the outstanding issues. They directed the Technical Support Committee to submit an updated list of priority activities to advance the implementation of the regional action plan developed under the Framework.

7. The participants commended the guarantors of the Framework for their continuing joint efforts to ensure the implementation of the decisions of the Regional Oversight Mechanism and the decisions of the policy organs of their respective organizations.

8. The participants welcomed the successful holding of the Private Sector Investment Conference for the Great Lakes Region in Kinshasa on 24 and 25 February 2016, as directed by the fifth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, held in Addis Ababa on 31 January 2015. In addition, they encouraged follow-up action with a view to further promoting the role of the private sector in support of peace and stability in the region.

9. The participants expressed appreciation to international partners for their commitment to supporting and facilitating the finalization of the Ruzizi III hydropower plant and encouraged continued efforts at national, regional and international levels to ensure the implementation of the Ruzizi I and II projects.

10. The participants took note of the declaration of the Women's Platform for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework issued on 12 July 2016 in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo. They recommitted themselves to strengthening the role and participation of women in political and development processes and directed their national institutions to follow up on the effective implementation of the declaration.

11. The participants also took note of recent positive steps taken to enhance judicial cooperation in the region and reiterated the need to pursue those efforts to ensure early and effective progress in the fight against impunity for serious crimes and violations of human rights, including sexual and gender-based violence.

12. The participants welcomed the launching, by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, of the Great Lakes Regional Strategic Framework 2016-2017 during an open debate of the Security Council on the prevention and resolution of conflicts in the Great Lakes region, held in New York on 21 March 2016 and chaired by the Republic of Angola. In addition, they encouraged the United Nations to continue to streamline and harmonize the efforts of its various entities, in close consultation with the countries of the region, with a view to supporting development efforts throughout the Great Lakes region.

13. The participants also welcomed the proposal by the Secretary-General for a separate annual session of the Security Council on the Great Lakes Region, in addition to the regular briefings on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and on the situation in that country.

Neutralization of negative forces and repatriation of disarmed combatants

14. The participants welcomed the ongoing cooperation and joint operations of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and MONUSCO against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), among others, and encouraged them to further strengthen their cooperation.

15. The participants also welcomed initiatives by the Framework guarantors in support thereof, which led to the meeting of Ministers of Defence of ICGLR and SADC member States, held in Nairobi on 20 July 2016. In this regard, the participants endorsed the recommendations of the Ministers at the meeting, who, inter alia:

(a) Tasked the chiefs of the defence staff with carrying out field visits to affected areas in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and with developing recommendations to further strengthen operations against armed groups;

(b) Called on the intelligence and security services to strengthen existing coordination and information-sharing mechanisms;

(c) Called for sustained and robust advocacy promoting the implementation of the repatriation to Rwanda of surrendered FDLR combatants in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or their resettlement in a third country outside of the region;

(d) Acknowledged the crucial role played by the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism as a confidence-building tool in the region and called on the representatives of the Framework guarantors and ICGLR member States to continue their robust advocacy and resource mobilization efforts in support of the mandate and activities of the Mechanism;

(e) Emphasized the need for signatory countries to abide by all their commitments under the Framework and the ICGLR Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region in relation to negative forces, in particular with respect to the second Framework commitment for the region, namely, to "neither tolerate nor provide assistance or support of any kind to armed groups", as a result of which, countries in the region should not provide asylum to former combatants who have been granted amnesty;

(f) Noted the need to identify countries, companies and individuals that trade with, and benefit from the illicit economic activities of, the negative forces in the region and the need to bring sanctions to bear through appropriate mechanisms;

(g) Further encouraged the ICGLR Executive Secretary and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to convene a dedicated meeting on the illegal exploitation and trade of natural resources.

16. The participants welcomed the establishment of a joint follow-up mechanism between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania to address the growing threat posed by ADF in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and across the region, in line with the decisions of the sixth Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the ICGLR, held in Luanda on 14 June 2016.

17. The participants reiterated the need to ensure progress in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, repatriation and resettlement of disarmed combatants.

18. The participants encouraged the countries concerned, with the support of the Framework guarantors and MONUSCO, to accelerate the repatriation of disarmed combatants present in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in neighbouring countries, notably former FDLR combatants and those of the former Mouvement du 23 mars (M23).

19. The participants further welcomed the joint evaluation meetings held in Kinshasa on 27 and 28 May and 27 and 28 June 2016, between representatives of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the delegation of the former M23, under the auspices of the country's national oversight mechanism and with the support of the Framework guarantors, to review the status of the implementation of the Nairobi declarations and discuss ways to overcome pending challenges, including the repatriation of ex-M23 combatants. The participants called on the guarantors to pursue this initiative.

Review of developments in the region

Relations between countries of the region

20. The participants encouraged countries of the region to intensify their efforts to further improve relations through bilateral channels and existing regional mechanisms, in line with the letter and spirit of the Framework and the ICGLR Pact. In this regard, they welcomed recent high-level meetings between leaders of the region to enhance confidence and cooperation between their countries.

Burundi

21. The participants welcomed the improvement of the security situation in Bujumbura and called on all Burundians to seek only peaceful solutions for addressing their grievances and to commit to inclusive dialogue. They reiterated their support for the East African Community facilitation effort led by the former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Benjamin Mkapa, and looked forward to the continuation of the dialogue. They encouraged the Government of Burundi and all Burundians to extend their full cooperation to the Facilitator with a view to

expediting the dialogue process, in line with the Constitution of Burundi and the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement of 2000.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

22. The participants condemned the violence that had erupted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 19 and 20 September 2016 and called on all parties to seek only peaceful solutions to the political crisis, in line with the country's Constitution and with Security Council resolution 2277 (2016). They expressed their support for the African Union facilitation effort led by Mr. Kodjo, assisted by the international support group for the facilitation of the national dialogue in the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as the efforts of the President of Angola and Chair of the ICGLR, José Eduardo dos Santos, and the President of the Republic of the Congo, Denis Sassou N'Guesso.

23. The participants noted with appreciation the encouragement by attendees of the SADC Summit, held in Swaziland on 30 and 31 August 2016, for all Democratic Republic of the Congo stakeholders to participate in the national dialogue and to agree on a concrete road map leading to the holding of elections. In addition, they renewed their call on all stakeholders to uphold the principles, ideals and aspirations of the Congolese people as enshrined in the Constitution, in accordance with SADC and African Union principles and guidelines governing democratic elections and in line with Security Council resolution 2277 (2016).

24. The participants congratulated the President for having convened the national dialogue, commended all stakeholders who took part in it and welcomed the signing on 18 October 2016 of the comprehensive political agreement on the organization of peaceful, credible and transparent elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They noted with appreciation the confidence-building measures taken so far by the Government and encouraged the latter, together with other stakeholders, to take additional confidence-building measures.

Central African Republic

25. The participants welcomed the efforts by the Government of the Central African Republic to promote dialogue and reconciliation and to extend state authority throughout the country, and called on all armed groups to engage in dialogue with the national authorities to ensure peace and stability. They stressed the need for sustained attention on the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army in parts of the Central African Republic and throughout the region and called on countries in the region to continue to cooperate towards neutralizing the Resistance Army, including through continued support to the African Union Regional Task Force for the elimination of the Resistance Army.

South Sudan

26. The participants expressed serious concern at renewed fighting between Government and Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition forces, as well as intercommunal violence in several parts of South Sudan. They called on all South Sudanese stakeholders to cease fighting immediately and to continue to faithfully implement the commitments made under the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, and looked forward to the early

conclusion of discussions between the Government of South Sudan, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the United Nations on the deployment of a regional protection force.

27. The participants took note of the extraction by MONUSCO, on humanitarian and security grounds, of a number of Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition elements that had crossed into the Democratic Republic of the Congo without authorization, and their subsequent disarmament and relocation from the border so as not to present a threat to South Sudan. They also took note of the position of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo not to allow a prolonged stay of these elements on its territory. In addition, they urged the region, Intergovernmental Authority member States, the African Union and the United Nations to assist the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in finding a durable solution for the removal of Liberation Movement/Army elements from its territory as soon as possible.

28. The participants encouraged the Government of South Sudan to continue its efforts to disarm the negative Sudanese forces present in South Sudan and to facilitate their repatriation.

Next high-level meeting of the regional oversight mechanism

29. The participants called on member States to express their interest in hosting future high-level meetings of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, in line with the decisions of the sixth high-level meeting of the Mechanism, held in New York on 29 September 2015, and the sixth Ordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the ICGLR, held in Luanda on 14 June 2016.

30. The participants welcomed the offer made by the Republic of the Congo to host the eighth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism at a date to be determined.

31. The participants extended their deep appreciation to the President and the Government and people of the Republic of Angola for hosting the Regional Oversight Mechanism and expressed their gratitude to all those who contributed to the success of the meeting.